

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSM-05 SSO-00 NSCE-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 IO-14 DHA-02 ORM-02 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /076 W
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O 081445Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO USDEL TAIF IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4645
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USDEL JERUSALEM
RUEHAM USDEL SECRETARY AMMAN
USDEL ALEXANDRIA

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 5853

TAIF FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY.

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS)
SUBJECT: PRESS ON VANCE MIDDLE EAST TOUR

SUMMARY: SECRETARY'S VISIT CONTINUES TO DOMINATE THE
FRONT PAGES. PESSIMISM ON CONVENING THE GENEVA TALKS
PERMEATES THE MEDIA. YESTERDAY'S CABINET SESSION,
BEGIN'S CALL ON ARAB LEADERS TO RECONSIDER ISRAEL-ARAB
FOREIGN MINISTER'S CONFERENCE, COMPOSITION OF ISRAELI
NEGOTIATING TEAM, AND REPORTS ON THE SECRETARY'S TALKS
IN AMMAN AND SAUDI ARABIA ARE FULLY COVERED. PRESS
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SPECULATES THAT ISRAEL WILL SHOW FLEXIBILITY REGARDING
THE FRAMEWORK OF THE TALKS. OFFICIALS IN SECRETARY'S
ENTOURAGE ARE QUOTED AS SAYING THAT FOLLOWING THE
REFUSAL OF THE ARAB STATES (EXCEPT EGYPT) TO NEGOTIATE
WITH ISRAEL IN NEW YORK, THE U.S. WOULD MAKE PROPOSALS
THAT ISRAEL WILL CATEGORICALLY OPPOSE. END SUMMARY.

1. ALL MORNING PAPERS REPORT APPOINTMENT OF SIX-MAN NEGOTIATING TEAM TO MEET DWITNKU.3. SECRETARY. THE CABINET HELD A DISCUSSION ON THE TALKS, DESCRIBED BY THE CABINET SECRETARY AS FOLLOWS: "THERE WAS UNANIMITY AMONG THEM (THE MINISTERS) BOTH AS REGARDS OUR POLICY ENDS AND THE MEANS FOR ACHIEVING THESE ENDS." HA'ARETZ (GOLAN) WRITES THAT "ISRAEL WILL INFORM SECRETARY VANCE OF ITS READINESS FOR ANY FORM OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ARAB STATES PROVIDED THAT THE ONLY AIM IS A PEACE TREATY." AL HAMISHMAR (SHEHORI) ADDS THAT "ISRAEL WILL NOT ENTER INTO DISCUSSIONS WITH THE U.S. ON QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES UNDER DISPUTE WITH THE ARAB STATES. HOWEVER, ISRAEL WILL CONSIDER IN ITS TALKS WITH THE SECRETARY SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE NEGOTIATING PROCEDURE, SUCH AS, FOR EXAMPLE, THE QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION."

2. DAVAR (BLOCH) WRITES: "AT THE FIRST STAGE OF THE VANCE TALKS ISRAEL WILL NOT SUBMIT ANY NEW INITIATIVES OR PROPOSALS BEYOND THOSE ALREADY RAISED BY THE PRIME MINISTER WHEN HE MET WITH THE U.S. PRESIDENT LAST MONTH. ISRAEL WILL PERSIST IN THE THREE ALTERNATIVES PROPOSED BY BEGIN: GENEVA TALKS, WORKING GROUPS OR PROXIMITY TALKS:...AT THE SAME TIME IT IS FELT BY POLITICAL SOURCES THAT IF THE VANCE

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TALKS END IN A STALEMATE DUE TO THE ARAB REFUSAL TO ACCEPT ISRAEL'S PROPOSALS, ISRAEL MAY HAVE TO RAISE NEW IDEAS, EITHER IN THE DIRECTION OF AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT OR OF PARTIAL SETTLEMENTS ALONG IDEAS FAVORED BY FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN."

3. SEVERAL PAPERS EXPRESS SURPRISE AT THE SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF THE ISRAELI NEGOTIATING TEAM. MA'ARIV EDITORIALIZES THAT "THE TEAM IS TOO BIG FOR ITS TASK; LESS THAN HALF A DOZEN MINISTERS WOULD HAVE SUFFICED TO MAN THE TEAM TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE AMERICANS."

4. DAVAR (BLOCH) REPORTS THAT INTERNAL PRESSURES BY COALITION FACTIONS TO A LARGE EXTENT DETERMINED THE COMPOSITION OF THE ISRAELI TEAM. "IT IS LEARNED FROM LIBERAL CIRCLES THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAXI ORIGINALLY INTENDED THE MINISTERIAL TEAM TO BE MADE UP OF THREE CABINET MEMBERS IN ADDITION TO HIMSELF-- FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN, DEFENSE MINISTER WEIZMAN, AND AGRICULTURE MINISTER SHARON. THIS FORMAT HAD APPARENTLY BEEN PLANNED WITH THE AIM OF DIMINISHING

THE PERSONAL WEIGHT CARRIED BY THE DEFENSE MINISTER
WITHIN THE CABINET. HOWEVER, THIS WAS VIGOROUSLY

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
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AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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TAIF FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY.

OPPOSED BY THE LIBERALS, WHO HAD PREVENTED MR. BEGIN
FROM MAKING SHARON DEFENSE MINISTER AT THE TIME. BOTH
THE LIBERALS AND THE NRP MINISTERS INSISTED THAT THE
TEAM DUE TO MET WITH SECRETARY VANCE BE MADE UP OF
EITHER THREE MINISTERS ONLY--BEGIN, DAYAN, AND
WEIZMAN-- OR THAT IT CONSISTS OF SIX: THE THREE ABOVE
MENTIONED, PLUS MESSRS. EHRLICH, SHARON, AND BURG.
THE DEMAND FOR A LARGER TEAM WAS ACCEPTED BY BEGIN,
WHO SUBMITTED IT TO THE CABINET FOR APPROVAL."
HA'ARETZ (GOLAN) SAYS THAT "THE INCLUSION OF SHARON
AROUSED SURPRISE IN JERUSALEM. IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT
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MR. EHRLICH WAS ADDED SINCE HE IN FACT SERVES AS ACTING PRIME MINISTER. DR. BURG'S ADDITION IS MEANT TO APPEASE THE NRP. BUT NO POLITICAL OR FUNCTIONAL EXPLANATION CAN BE FOUND FOR ADDING MR. SHARON TO THE TEAM."

5. ALL NEWSPAPERS FRONTPAGE BEGIN'S CALL ON SYRIAN AND JORDANIAN LEADERS TO RECONSIDER THEIR REJECTION OF JOINT ISRAELI-ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS' TALKS. BEGIN, HOWEVER, ADDED THAT "IF THEY WOULD NOT DO SO, ISRAEL WAS PREPARED TO MEET IN ANY CONVENIENT FORUM LIKELY TO FURTHER THE CAUSE OF PEACE--INCLUDING A FORMAT WHICH WOULD HAVE THE U.S. ACTING AS MEDIATOR BETWEEN THE ISRAELI AND ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS" (JERUSALEM POST).

6. ON THE SECRETARY'S TALKS IN AMMAN AND SAUDI ARABIA, THE PRESS RELIES ON AMERICAN REPORTERS ACCOMPANYING THE ENTOURAGE. HUSSEIN'S POSITION IS REGARDED BY THE ISRAEL PRESS AS VERY SIMILAR TO THAT ADOPTED BY PRESIDENT ASSAD. MA'ARIV HEADLINE STORY (PHILIP BENN) QUOTES N.Y. TIMES REPORTS THAT THE U.S. WOULD DECIDE ON TALKS WITH ARAFAT, AND THAT EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA EXERT PRESSURE FOR ESTABLISHING A PALESTINIAN GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE. BENN ADDS THAT ACCORDING TO THE U.S. REPORTERS COVERING THE VANCE VISIT, "AMERICAN OFFICIALS ARE OPENLY HINTING THAT, FOLLOWING THE REFUSAL OF THE ARAB STATES, EXCEPT EGYPT, TO OPEN NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAEL IN NEW YORK OR WASHINGTON WITHOUT THE PLO, THE U.S. IS PREPAING PROPOSALS, WHICH ISRAEL WILL CATEGORICALLY OPPOSE. THESE OFFICIALS GO EVEN FURTHER, FORECASTING A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN PRESIDENT CARTER AND PREMIER UNCLASSIFIED

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BEGIN."

7. HA'ARETZ (MARCUS) WRITES FROM WASHINGTON ON THE BROADER ASPECTS OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT. "COORDINATION BETWEEN THE ARAB COUNTRIES DOES NOT EXACTLY APPEAR TO BE FLOURISHING THESE DAYS. VANCE MAY HAVE DISCOVERED IN THIS ERODED ARAB WORLD, WITH ITS POLARIZED ATTITUDES ON A POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT, THAT THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IS NOT MERELY A PROBLEM BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE ARABS, BUT MAINLY ONE AMONG THE ARABS THEMSELVES. IF ISRAEL WERE SUDDENLY AND UNILATERALLY TO LEAVE THE WEST BANK

ALTOGETHER, WOULD NOT A WAR BREAK OUT AMONG THE
ARABS OVER THE TERRITORY THUS VACATED?...ON THIS
SUMMER COURSE MR. VANCE WILL LEARN THAT THE PRINCIPAL
PROBLEM IN THE CONFLICT IS STILL EVERYONE'S DESIRE
TO OBTAIN THE MAXIMUM AND OFFER A MINIMUM AND ANY
MOVEMENT MADE SO FAR IS SO VERY SMALL AS TO BE
WHOLLY INSIGNIFICANT."
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Enclosure: n/a
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